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From the Dean

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From the Dean

These are among the best of times for biomedical research with strong support from public and private sectors and a robust economy. The molecular biology revolution is profoundly



advancing an understanding of disease in humans and animals and is spawning fundamentally new directions for the pharmaceutical industry. This has not gone unnoticed by lawmakers on

Capitol Hill who are persuaded that biomedical research is perched on the threshold of a new era that will transform the practice of medicine and veterinary medi-

cine in the next decade. The Republican majority in the House after stating that they would slash research spending to balance the budget when they initially came into power, now see the molecular biology revolution as an engine of economic growth. As a result, the Legislature has approved a remarkable 15 percent increase in the budget for the National Institutes of Health with the goal of doubling the NIH budget to \$27 billion in the next five years. This translates into improved research funding, especially for basic research.

One of the distinctive qualities of the School is its strength in basic research, few other veterinary schools can match us in this regard. Hence, the increase in NIH funding appeared potentially meaningful to me but I did not anticipate just how meaningful it would be. In the last academic year, FY'98, NIH funding for

competitive research grants at the School increased by an astonishing 38 percent compared to the previous year. And, just when I thought this growth could not be sustained, it appears to have increased by a further 40 percent in the first quarter of the present academic year. This is an extraordinary achievement by the faculty and we should take great pride in the fact that the rise far exceeds the proportionate increase in the NIH budget.

The present success says a great deal about the intellectual vigor of the School and augers well for our long term objectives of developing new, multi-disciplinary programs in genetics, comparative oncology, germ cell biology and infectious disease research. 🏠

Alan M. Kelly

The Gilbert S. Kahn Dean of Veterinary Medicine

Dr. Raker Honored

At the recent AEEP meeting the School honored Dr. Charles Raker, V'42, Lawrence Baker Sheppard Emeritus Professor of Surgery, by presenting him the School's Bellwether Medal. Following is the citation.

CHARLES W. RAKER, V.M.D.

Charles Raker, a Penn undergraduate entering the School of Veterinary Medicine in 1938, graduating with high honors in 1942, you were chosen as valedictorian of a class that boasted many luminaries.

In 1950 you became Assistant Professor of Medicine & Director of Clinics, Bolton Farm, Bucks County, and you moved to South Brook Farm, now New Bolton Center, in 1952 with the School's field operations.

You made your mark quickly and in 1954, Dean Mark Allam appointed you to be Director of Large Animal Clinics & Chair, Dept. of Surgery in Philadelphia. You took over an ailing referral service in the Old Quad with its circus like atmosphere of trucks, trailers, vans, unloading horses, cows, and swine, grooms, manure, students exercising dogs and horses, all circulating

around sodden fecal field. Heroically, you transformed this equine service into one that attracted the very best quality horses from throughout the county and the waiting list for elective surgery grew alarmingly.

Due to your burgeoning reputation, private support came to the School and in 1964 the service moved to New Bolton Center and facilities that more appropriately matched your skills. You went on to make this the World's leading clinic for equine surgical care.

Over the years you received much recognition as a renowned veterinarian, teacher, visionary, colleague and friend of the School. The Norden Teaching Award was bestowed in 1965 and in 1967 you were selected to receive the first endowed chair in the School, the Lawrence Baker Sheppard Professor of Surgery. In 1967 you became the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association's, Veterinarian of the Year. As a founding member of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons you were its distinguished President in 1975.

In 1985, after 35 years you retired from the faculty but actively continued to advance equine programs at New Bolton Center.

Charlie Raker you have had an extraordinary distinguished career. But your most outstanding quality and the one that transcends your other prodigious talents is your wondrous humanity and compassion. You are totally dedicated to helping others and to fostering young careers. You prepared a host of interns and residents to be outstanding equine surgeons and they are all indelibly stamped with the rare qualities you represent. An expression of your immense stature and clearly demonstrating that you were a man ahead of your time, one of your first interns was a woman. An astonishing number of successful equine surgeons today owe their careers to you and they are proud to acknowledge your role. And even now, 60 years after you first came to the School, you continue to foster young careers, leading the highly successful Opportunity Scholarship Program for students at the School.

Charles Raker, V.M.D., you are an inspiration to all those whose lives you have touched and the School is proud to present you with the Bellwether Medal for Distinguished Leadership.

December 6, 1998